



Cedric Cheong and Peter Dingle with a family featured in one of the episodes of the documentary.

Hidden home pollution

By **BRENDA CHEW**

Mould in your home could be making you sick, according to lecturers from Murdoch University.

Environmental science lecturers Cedric Cheong and Peter Dingle realised there was a lack of awareness about health hazards of mould while they were making a documentary.

Mr Cheong, a Canning Vale resident, said there was more to mould than just the appearance and the smell.

"What families don't know is that the smell is the odour of microbial volatile organic compounds, or MVC for short," he said.

Mr Cheong said the mould could release the pollutants inside the home.

"The problem is that people get desensitised to the smell after living in the home for a period of

lems they have.

"Mould can cause respiratory problems, irritation to the ears, eyes, nose and throat and affects people's mood as they become lethargic and irritable."

According to Mr Cheong, one of the homes he visited for the documentary had such a severe problem of mould that it was affecting the relationship of the couple.

"Within a few minutes when the camera crew stepped into their house, we started feeling dizzy and snapped at one another," he said.

"It was unsurprising that the couple didn't have a very happy relationship.

"We believed we saved their baby's life by telling them the causal problem.

"The baby was born with a kidney condition and staying in the mouldy home actually exac-

him with his pale eyes and sunken appearance."

Mr Dingle said that the first step to fixing the problem is to change the mindset.

"We should have a more proactive attitude," he said. "When you see a leaky faucet or a wet puddle on the floor, don't wait, wipe it dry immediately."

He said that there was a lack of ventilation in Australian homes.

"Our homes have changed a lot over the past 30 years," he said. "They have become more polluted and more airtight, causing increased humidity and indoor allergens.

"Once the home is well ventilated, it will be less damp and naturally, prevents the outbreak of mould.

"Families will need to open their windows and doors to allow fresh air into their home.